



## Concerning the Word of Life: Praying the Lenten Lectionary

**Focusing on the formative power of the Word of God, living and active, proclaimed and lived in the midst of the community of disciples.**

*This reflection may be done with a prayer partner or small group or it may be done alone. If you are able to engage in theological reflection with another or others, take time to share your reflections together.*

**Proclamation:** Proclaim or read the passage 1 John 1, 1-3.

*What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked upon and touched with our hands concerns the Word of life – for the life was made visible; we have seen it and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was made visible to us – what we have seen and heard we proclaim now to you....*

Pause for silent reflection.

*Ponder why and how the writer of this passage is able to proclaim the Word of God with such confidence, joy, and enthusiasm.*

Re-read the passage a second time

**Reflection:** Reflect/journal on the following:

*Liturgical Theologian Kevin Irwin, in his book entitled Models of the Eucharist (New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 2005) says about the Word of God: “What we hear happens. What we proclaim occurs. What the Word says becomes an act of grace and favor for us here and now, for our salvation and for our more complete union with God. (p.101)”*

1. *When and how have you experienced the Word of God “happening” in your life?*
2. *Does Kevin Irwin’s description aptly describe your experience with the Church’s lectionary of readings? If so, how? If not, why not?*

### **The Tradition** (liturgical theology)

The journey of Christian discipleship leads to conversion of heart and mind manifested in lives of fidelity to the person, message, and mission of the Risen Christ. The content of the proclamation of the gospel narratives is the Word-made-flesh, Christ who has died and is risen, and who is the revelation of God in our midst. The call to discipleship modeled by Jesus himself is invitational and ongoing, beginning with God’s own initiative in the heart of the each of us. Gradually the Spirit draws us ever more deeply into dialog and relationship with God in Christ Jesus, according to our own particular circumstances and needs. The Lenten proclamations of this call can evoke deep personal commitment and assent to the revelation that Jesus himself truly is. They can rekindle our willingness to change from a former way of being to a new way of being to follow his way. The consequences of pondering the Lenten lectionary entail a daily and ultimate path through the cross of darkness and death, through hope founded on faith in Christ Jesus, to newness of life in him who has first loved, graciously and unconditionally.

The Word of God proclaimed and lived within the community of faith is creative, active, and dynamic. It has the power to touch and change hearts, literally to recreate persons and communities as God acts in the moment and in the midst of the listening assembly. As the liturgical year is lived and the lectionary is proclaimed year after year, the Word of God has the power to and renew the face of the earth. Those who hear the Word with open hearts and minds can be drawn into a profound sense of the mystery of salvation. Entering into the mysteries of faith through prayerful reflection on the Word of God, enlightened by contemporary historical criticism and theologically solid exegesis, can lead those who seek to live in faithful discipleship into deeper relationship with the God who is revealed, and to a more active participation in responding to that revelation in heart, word, and action.

Our Lenten reflection on the Word of God has the potential to gather us into a radically holistic experience of the unconditional love of God revealed in the Paschal Mystery of Jesus. Engaging questions about the Word of God may open up new possibilities for deeper spirituality, first in one's own life of discipleship and consequently in one's faith community. God's Word will be alive and most effective when what is proclaimed actually happens in the midst of the community, when what is proclaimed takes place in the hearts and lives of us who hear, and when God's grace through the Word draws us as individuals and in community into the intimacy and communion with God that is the fundamental desire of our lives.

Throughout this Lent, as our individual stories unfold in light of the great stories of God, may our deeper understanding of both lead to a response of loving relationship with God revealed in Christ and in community. May loving draw us into participation in the community life of the Church and the world through actions for justice and lives of peace. In turn, may our participation inspire and urge us towards an ever deepening commitment to a life of discipleship. And, finally, may our commitment be lived out in the witness of our lives as sisters of Blessed Marie Rose and sisters to each other in the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary. May we truly proclaim – through our words, actions, and manner of life – the primacy of the love of God.

## **Reflection**

1. *In what ways does the liturgy of the Word during the Lenten season inspire and guide you as a faithful disciple today?*
2. *How do the proclamation of the Word and its interpretation touch your mind and heart, opening your religious imagination as you journey through Lent?*
3. *What hinders you from putting greater trust in the power of the Word of God?*

(The questions above may be used in reference to each Sunday's proclamation throughout the Lenten season.)

## **Scripture**

Re-read John 1, 1-3.

## **Reflection/Discernment for action/response**

1. *How might God be calling you to act with greater trust in the formative power of God's Word in your own life this Lent?*
2. *What implications might putting greater trust in the formative power of God's Word have on your Lenten practice and daily life?*
3. *What implications might acting with greater trust in the formative power of God's Word have on your life of discipleship? To what does the Lenten Word call you?*

(The questions above and blessing below may be used in reference to each Sunday's proclamation throughout the season of Lent.)

**Ritual Prayer**            (Bless one another or yourself)

*May the Word of God be in your (my) mind, that you (I) may grow in understanding.*

*May the Word of God open your eyes, that you may see the revelation of God in all that surrounds you and especially in the faces of your sisters and brothers.*

*May the Word of God open your ears, that you may hear the call to faithful discipleship and respond to the cries of the poor.*

*May the Word of God live in your heart, that you may love well in communion with God who loves you unconditionally.*

*May the Word of God happen in all that you say, do, and are in the holy names of Jesus and Mary.*